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FRIDAY
APRIL 30, 1954

Having, because of E.'s measles, cancelled our trip to Sevilla for the feria, where we had intended to stay with Pauline and Philippe, we arrived at Padua about noon. Arthur Lane [redacted] kindly met us in his car and piloted us through the beautiful old city to Abano Terme, ten kilometers distant. There we put up at the Hotel Orologio. It had rained hard all morning, but the sun broke through before lunch and the country looked soddenly festive. Abano is underlaid with sulphur springs, and is famed as a cure place for rheumatic ailments. This is the fourth time Lane has been here for his gout and he has always derived great benefit from it.

This afternoon Cornelia and Arthur motored us to the Brenta region, where many fine Palladian-type villas are to be seen. We visited the tremendous and beautiful Pisani villa at Stra. This palace, for such it is, with perhaps two hundred rooms, was fifteen years abuilding in the early part of the eighteenth century, under the direction and at the expense of the patrician Pisani family of Venice. The result is superb. The stables, with twenty-four stalls, the entrances of which are defined by marble columns, each surmounted by a bronze horse (Byron kept one or more steeds there while Countess Guiccoli, who had the run of the house, was his mistress), the huge canal, innumerable fountains and statues, delicately-wrought iron gates, orangeries, a coffee house, gardeners' quarters, a labyrinth of box where without a guide one would be almost irretrievably lost - this was said to be a favorite pleasure resort for gallant ladies and gentlemen in the good old days -- all combine to make the environment of this majestic pile graceful, attractive, and impressive.

Little furniture remains, and such as does is distinctly second-rate with the exception of two beds, one installed for Eugène Beauharnais, and the other for Napoleon I. Napoleon bought the villa in 1807. His sister Caroline inhabited

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it, [redacted] then it was taken over by the Italian kings, and finally became, what it now is, a national monument open to visitors.

The frescoes, and a few paintings, are [redacted] fine, as are most of the Bohemian glass chandeliers. The ballroom is of a size and gilded splendor quite unique for a privat house. The rooms are huge, with marble floors, high ceilings, and gay decorations. The atmosphere must have been joyous in this elegant retreat from the summer airs of Venice.

The doctor examined E. and myself to determine if we are fit for the strong medicine of the mud baths. He told me I had an enlarged heart and its muscles were in bad shape. Also, surprisingly, the upper register of my blood pressure was only 115. The doctor asked if I smoked and drank a great deal. I told him I did so habitually. This seemed puzzling. Finally, he declared no objection to my taking a few minutes of mud per day. E. was pronounced fit for the limit.

We had some Soave Bertani 1949 and felt fine. Unfortunately, at night this hotel abounds in mosquitoes -- large, bustling brutes. We sprayed our rooms with Italian DDT, but to little avail. Why no European hotels use wire screening is a mystery.

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